

REMARKS

The Examiner noted a provisional double patenting issue with respect to several co-pending applications of the applicant. These provisional double patenting issues will be addressed when ripe.

Independent Claim 1 defines the invention as a vehicle headliner including a core comprising polyurethane resin foam and a structural reinforcement layer provided adjacent the core. The structural reinforcement layer includes a plurality of carbon fibers and a binder for adhering the plurality of carbon fibers to one another thereby forming a mat.

Independent Claim 21 defines the invention as a vehicle headliner including a core including polyurethane resin foam and a structural reinforcement layer provided adjacent the core. The structural reinforcement layer includes a plurality of carbon fibers and a plurality of basalt fibers.

New independent Claim 22 defines the invention as a laminate including a core including polyurethane resin foam and a thermosetting resin applied to a side of the core. Carbon fibers are adhered to the core by the thermosetting resin.

New independent Claim 26 defines the invention as a laminate including a core including polyurethane resin foam and a structural reinforcement layer provided adjacent the core. The structural reinforcement layer including fibers with a degradation point above the incineration point of the other materials of the laminate.

The Examiner rejected Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Arthurs reference in view of the Michael reference ('989). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Arthurs reference discloses a polyurethane foam laminate for use in headliners. The laminate includes a layer of polyurethane foam bonded or laminated to a layer of fiberglass matte and/or a layer of polyurethane foam. The structure is bonded together by an adhesive that is a grafted polyethylene or grafted polypropylene. See col. 3, lines 6-32. The laminate may include various layers of polyurethane foam, glass matte, and cellulosic materials. The Arthurs reference teaches the use of a grafted polyethylene or grafted polypropylene adhesive in lieu of

the traditional adhesive, a polyurethane adhesive, "which has given liners of acceptable structural properties." See Col. 1, lines 15-25.

The Michael reference ('989) teaches a method 10 of making an article from natural or synthetic fiber 40 and a resinous binder 42. The fiber 40 and the binder 42 may be delivered onto a fabric, vinyl, or leather door skin 44. The fiber 40 "may be selected from a group consisting of, for example, kenaf, jute, sisal, hemp and mixtures thereof. The use of natural fibers allows for the production of an environmentally friendly product that is more readily recyclable. It should also be appreciated, however, that the continuous fiber strand may be a synthetic fiber such as, for example, polyester, glass, carbon, polyolefin, and any polymer...." See Paragraph 0017.

The Examiner has asserted that it would be obvious to have used the Michael reference's carbon fibers and binder in the laminate of the Arthurs reference, motivated by the desire to create a laminate having enhanced lamination strength. Applicants respectfully disagree.

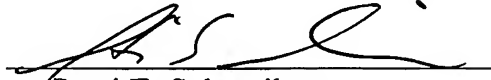
The Arthurs reference teaches the use of a grafted polyethylene or grafted polypropylene adhesive to provide the desired strength in a headliner. The Michael reference ('989) teaches that a variety of fibers and mixtures thereof may be used in a headliner. Neither reference teaches the combination of the carbon fibers and binder of the Michael reference in the laminate of the Arthurs reference to create a laminate having enhanced lamination strength as suggested by the Examiner. There is no teaching contained in either of the references that supports the combination proposed by the Examiner.

The express teachings of the references teach away from the combination proposed by the Examiner, because the combination of the references is just as likely to produce a variety of other composite combinations besides the claimed invention. A proper combination of the teachings of the Arthurs reference with the Michael ('989) reference would result in the fiberglass and adhesive of the Arthurs reference applied to the door skin of the Michael reference ('989). Further, the teachings of the Arthurs reference cannot be properly combined with the teachings of the Michael

reference ('989), because there is no motivation for making such a combination in either reference.

For the reasons mentioned above with respect to Claim 1, Claims 2-9 and 21-26 are also believed to be patentable over the cited references.

Respectfully submitted,



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